

**THE
M A V I A D
OR
THE AUTHOR
OF
THE BAVIAD**

*Qui BAVIAD non edit, amet tunc carmina MAVI:
Atque idem jungat vulpes, et malignas histas.*

May he who hates not CAUSCA's *Ador* write
Love MERRY's *Amator** profusely, & smooth and sweet—
The same may take for fault in *Passion** Italy
And hear his hogs, poor fool! and milk his bull.

* For a very pretty specimen of this for the True Believer for *Passion*.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

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PALL MALL; J. BELL, ESQ., OXFORD STREET; AND W. RICHARDSON,
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1796.

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BY

THE AUTHOR

OF

THE RAVIAD



THE SECOND EDITION

LONDON:
PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, 1773.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

O *THAT* mine enemy had written a book!—I have a great respect for the character of Job; but the refined cruelty of the above wish has sometimes led me to doubt whether he were really the forbearing man he is represented to be.

Among the scribblers at Florence I found a Mr. Parsons.—Him I purposely avoided mentioning; not because he was less ignorant than the rest, (always excepting Mr. Greathead, who, when all fools take the field, will certainly carry the banner) but because his vanity (the only thing I quarrelled with) *seemed* less offensive. Whether the gentleman thought himself injured by this suppression of his name, I cannot say; but he immediately
called

called for pen and ink, and not having the exclamation of Job before his eyes, sat down in the very torrent and whirlwind of passion "to write a book."

This, which consists of notes on the *MÆVIAD*, has fallen into my hands: and, to make amends for my former silence, and do justice to Mr. Parsons, I shall take the liberty of introducing one or two of them in this place; reserving the publication of the remainder for a work of greater magnitude.

In the *MÆVIAD*, p. xiv. I observe, that, when it was nearly finished, I *laid it aside* for two years. Here Mr. Parsons sarcastically cries out "*Two years!* So this poem was *two years in hand*. It certainly was not worth the labour!!!"

p. 25. Then, then, I hate the magic that deceiv'd,
And blush'd to think how fondly I BELIEV'D.

Mr. Parsons' note on this passage is—"Did you BELIEVE! Could you possibly be so ignorant?"—Even so, most redoubted Aristarchus. But I humbly conceive Mr. Mason, who seduced my unsuspecting youth, is equally culpable with myself. There is also one William Shakespeare, who, I am ready to take my oath, is a notorious offender in this way; having led not only me, but divers others, into the most gross and ridiculous errors;

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errors; making us laugh, cry, do what he pleases, for persons whom we ought to have known to be mere non-entities.

But Mr. Parsons has happily obtained an obdurate and impassible head: let him, therefore, "give God thanks, and make no boast of it." He is a wise and a wary reader, and follows the advice of the most judicious *Bottom*, who, like himself, had too much sagacity to be imposed upon by a feigned character. "No," quoth he, "let him thrust his face through the lion's neck, and say, If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life —no, I am no such thing: I am a man, as other men are;—and then, indeed, let him name his name, and tell them plainly that he is *SNUG* the joiner."

But enough of the accuracy and good taste of Mr. Parsons. What has been said is more than sufficient to shew, that, notwithstanding my former omission, (for which I take shame to myself) he is, and was, and always will be, a worthy member of the *Cruscan Fraternity*. Make room therefore, gentlemen, and receive him as you ought.

Atque viro *BAVII* chorus assurrexerit omnis.

INTRODUCTION.

IN 1785, a few English of both sexes*, whose chance had jumbled together at Florence, took a fancy to while away their time in scribbling high-flown panegyrics on themselves; and complimentary "canzonettas" on two or three Italians, who understood too little of the language in which they were written to be disgusted with them. In this there was not much harm; nor, indeed, much good: but, as folly is progressive,

NOTES.

* Among whom I find the names of Mrs. Piozzi, Mr. Greathead, Mr. Merry, &c.

† Mrs. Piozzi has since published a work on what she is pleased to call *BARRMAN SYNONIMES*; the better, I suppose, to enable these gentlemen to comprehend her multifarious erudition.

Though "no one better knows his own house" than I the vanity of this woman; yet the idea of her undertaking such a work had never entered my head; and I was thunderstruck when I first saw it announced. To execute it with any tolerable degree of success, required a rare combination of talents, among the least of which may be numbered, neatness of style, acuteness of perception, and a more than common accuracy of discrimination; and Mrs. P—— brought to the task, a person long since become proverbial for its vulgarity, an utter incapability of defining a single term in the language, and just as much Latin from a child's *Syntax*, as sufficed to ex-

they soon wrought themselves into an opinion that they really deserved the fine things which were mutually said and sung of each other.

Thus persuaded, they were unwilling their inimitable productions should be confined to the little circle that produced them; they therefore transmitted them hither; and, as their friends were enjoined not to shew them, they were first handed about the town with great assiduity, and then sent to the press.

A short time before the period we speak of, a knot of fantastic coxcombs had set up a daily paper called the *WORLD**. It was perfectly unintelligible, and therefore much read: it was equally lavish of praise and abuse, (praise of what appeared in its own columns, and abuse of every thing that appeared elsewhere,) and as its conductors were at once ignorant and con-

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pose the ignorance she so anxiously labours to conceal. "If such a one be fit to write on *SYNONIMES*, speak." Pignotti himself laughs in his sleeve; and his countrymen, long since undeceived, prize the lady's talents at their true worth,

Et centum tales eurto centusse licentur.*

* In this paper were given the earliest specimens of those unqualified, and audacious attacks on all private character; which the town first smiled at for their quaintness, then tolerated for their absurdity; and now—that other papers equally wicked, and more intelligible, have ventured to imitate it,—will have to lament to the last hour of British liberty.

* *Quere Thralès* :

PRINTER'S DEVIL.

ceited

ceited, they took upon them to direct the taste of the town, by prefixing a short panegyric to every trifle which came before them.

It is scarcely necessary to observe that Yendas* and Laura Marias, and Tony Pasquins, have long claimed a prescriptive right to infest most periodical publications: but as the Editors of them never pretended to criticise their harmless productions, they were merely read, laughed at, and forgotten. A paper, therefore, that introduced their trash with hyperbolical encomiums, and called on the town to admire it, was an acquisition of the utmost importance to these poor people, and naturally became the grand depository of their lucubrations.

At this auspicious period the first cargo of poetry arrived from Florence, and was given to the public through the medium of this favoured paper. There was a specious brilliancy in these exotics, which dazzled the native grubs, who had scarce ever ventured beyond a sheep, and a crook, and a rose-tree grove, with an ostentatious display of "blue hills," and "crashing torrents," and "petrifying suns!" From admiration to imi-

NOTES.

* I find I have been guilty of a misnomer in the Baviad, (v. 187.) Mr. Adney having politely informed me that his christian name is not Timothy, but Thomas. The Anagram in question, therefore, must be MOT YENDA; omitting the *H euphoniae gratia*. I am very happy in an opportunity of doing justice to so honest a gentleman, and I pray him to continue his valuable labours.

tation is but a step. Honest Yenda tried his hand at a descriptive ode, and succeeded beyond his hopes; Anna Matilda followed; in a word,

—— contagio labem

Hanc dedit in plures, sicut grex totus in agris
Unius scabie cadit, et porrigine porci.

While the epidemic malady was spreading from fool to fool, Della Crusca came over, and immediately announced himself by a sonnet to Love. Anna Matilda wrote an incomparable piece of nonsense in praise of it; and the two "great luminaries of the age," as Mr. Bell calls them, fell desperately in love* with each other. From that period not a day passed without

NOTES.

* The termination of this "everlasting" attachment was curious. When the "genuine enthusiasm of the correspondence" (Preface to the Album) had continued for some time, Della Crusca became impatient for a sight of his beloved, and Anna, in evil hour, consented to become visible. What was the consequence!

Tacta places audita places, *si non videare*

Tota places, neutro *si videare* places.

Mr. Bell, however, tells the story another way; and he is probably right. According to him, "Chance alone procured them an interview." Whatever procured it, all the lovers of "true poetry," with Mrs. Piozzi at their head, expected wonders from it. The flame that burnt with such ardour, while the lady was yet unseen, they hoped would blaze with unexampled brightness at the sight of the bewitching object. Such were their hopes. But what, as Dr. Johnson gravely asks, are the hopes of man! or indeed of woman!—for this fatal meeting put an end to the whole.

Except

an amatory epistle fraught with lightning and thunder; et quicquid habent telorum, armamentaria cæli. The fever turned to a frenzy: Laura Maria, Carlos, Orlando, Reuben, Miranda, Leonardo, Adelaide, and a thousand other nameless names caught the infection; and from one end of the kingdom* to the other, all was nonsense and Della Crusca.

Even THEN, I waited with a patience which I can better account for, than excuse, for some one (abler than myself) to

NOTES.

Except a marvellous dithyramb which Della Crusca wrote while the inspiration was yet warm upon him, and which consequently gave a most accurate account of it; nothing has since appeared to the honour of Anna Maria: and the "poetess," the "angel," the "goddess," has sunk into an old woman; with the comforting reflection of having lisp'd love strains to an ungrateful swain.

non hic est sermo puerilis

In vetula, quoties lascivum intervenit illud

Ζωή ηαι Φύξη.

* Kingdom. This is a trifle. Heaven itself, if we may believe Mrs. Robinson, took part in the general infatuation.

" ——— When midst ætherial fire

Thou strik'st thy DELLA CRUSCAN lyre,

Round to catch the heavenly song,

Myriads of wondering seraphs throng!"

I almost shudder while I quote: but so it ever is,

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

And Merry (see the Baviad) had given an example of impious temerity, which this wretched woman was but too eager to imitate.

scip

step forth, to correct the growing depravity of the public taste, and check the inundation of absurdity that was bursting upon us from a thousand springs. As no one appeared, and as the evil grew every day more alarming (for now bed-ridden old women, and girls at their samplers, began to rave) I determined, without much confidence of success, to try* what could be effected by my feeble powers; and accordingly wrote the *BAVIAD*.

I was not ignorant of what I exposed myself to, by the publication of this poem. If abuse could have affected me, I should not probably have made a set of people my enemies, habituated to ill language, and possessed of such convenient vehicles for its dissemination. But I never regarded it from such hands; and, indeed, deprecated nothing but their praise. I respect, in common with every man of sense, the censure of

NOTES.

* I cannot repeat too often that I quarrel not so much with the nonsense of the day, as with the bare-faced obtrusion of it on the town. Poor innocents, mistaking idleness for love, and an itch of scribbling for inspiration, have abounded in all ages; and foul befall the man who attempts to repress their harmless struggles for ease—for such I consider their poetical exertions to be. But when the Editors of our periodical sheets gravely assure us that our Popes, and our Miltons, are daily outdone by them, they become objects of serious criticism; and it is the duty of every one to point out the absurdity of their compositions, as a previous step to the exposure of the ignorance and impudence of the E—s, the T—s, and the B—s, who so strenuously recommend them to general notice, and imitation.

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the wise and good: but the angry ebullitions of folly unmasked, and vanity mortified, pass by me, "like the idle wind;" or, if noticed, serve merely to grace some succeeding edition of the Baviad.

I confess, however, that the work was received more favourably than I expected. Bell, indeed, and a few others, whose craft I had touched, vented their indignation in prose, and verse: but, on the whole, the clamour against me was not loud; and was lost by insensible degrees in the applauses of such as I was truly ambitious to please.

Thus supported, the good effects of the satire (*gloriosè loquor*) were not long in manifesting themselves. Della Crusca appeared no more in the Oracle, and, if any of his followers ventured to treat the town with a soft sonnet, it was not, as before, introduced by a pompous preface. Pope and Milton resumed their superiority; and Este and his coadjutors, silently acquiesced in the growing opinion of their incompetency, and shewed some sense of shame.

With this I was satisfied. I had taken up my pen for no other end: and was quietly retiring, with the idea that I had "done the state some service;" and purposing to abandon for ever the cæstus, which a respectable critic fancies I wielded "with too much severity;" when I was once more called into
the

the lifts*, by the re-appearance of some of the scattered enemy.

It was not enough that the stream of folly flowed more sparingly in the Oracle than before ; I was determined

To have the current in *that place* damm'd up ;
And accordingly began the present poem—for which, indeed, I had by this time other reasons. I had been told that there were still a few admirers of the Cruscan school, who thought the contempt I shewed for it not sufficiently justified by the few passages I had produced. To silence these objections, therefore, I thought it best to exhibit the tribe of Bell once more ; and, as they passed in review before me, to make such additional extracts from their works, as should put their demerits beyond the power of future question.

NOTES.

* I hope no one will do me the injustice to suppose that I imagine myself another Hercules, contending with Hydras, &c. Far from it. My enemies cannot well have a humbler opinion of me, than I have of myself ; and yet “ if I am not ashamed of them, I am a soufed gurnet.” Mere pecora inertia ! The contest is without danger, and the victory without glory. At the same time I declare against any undue advantage being taken of these concessions. Though I knew the impotence of these literary Askaparts, the town did not : and many a man, who now affects to pity me for wasting my strength upon unresisting imbecillity, would, not long since, have heard their poems with applause, and their praises with delight.

† I know it will be said that I have done it, usque ad nauseam. I confess it ; and for the reason given above. And yet I can honestly assure the reader, that most, if
not

I remembered that this gentleman in his excellent remarks on the Baviad, had said the author had "bespattered *nearly* all the poetical eminence of the day." Anxious, therefore, to do impartial justice, I ran for the ALBUM, to discover whom I had spared. Here I read, "In this collection are names whom Genius will ever look upon as its *best* supporters, Sheridan"—what is "SAUL also among the Prophets!"—Sheridan, Merry, Cowley, Andrews, Jerningham, Colman, Topham, Robinson, &c."

Thus furnished with "all" the poetical eminence of the day, I proceeded, as Mr. Bell says, to bespatter it; taking for the vehicle of my design, a Satire of Horace—to which I was led, by its supplying me (amidst many happy allusions) with an opportunity, I was not unwilling to seize, of briefly noticing the present wretched state of dramatic poetry*.

NOTES.

not all, of the trash I have quoted, passed with the authors for superlative beauties; every second word being printed either in italics, or capitals.

* I know not if the stage has been so low, since the days of Gammar Gurton, as at this hour. It seems as if all the blockheads in the kingdom had started up, and exclaimed, *una voce*, Come! let us write for the theatres. In this there is nothing perhaps altogether new; the striking, and peculiar novelty of the times seems to be, that ALL* they write is received. Of the three parties concerned in this business, the

* I recollect but two exceptions. Merry's idiotical Opera, and Mrs. Robinson's more idiotical Farce. To have failed where O'Keefe succeeded, argues a degree of stupidity scarcely credible. Surely "Ignorance itself is a planet" over the heroes and heroines of the Baviad!

C

writers

When the *MÆVIAD* (so I call the present poem) was nearly brought to a conclusion, I laid it aside. The times seemed unfavourable to such productions. Events of real importance were momentarily claiming the attention of the public; and the still voice of the muses was not likely to be listened to amidst the din of arms. After an interval of two years, however, circumstances, which it is not material to mention, have induced me to finish, and trust it, without more preface, to the candour, to which I am already so highly indebted for the warm reception of the *Baviad*.

I should here conclude this Introduction, already too long; were it not for the sake of noticing the strange inconsistency of the town. I hear that I am now breaking butterflies upon

NOTES.

writers and the managers seem the least culpable. If the town will have husks, extraordinary pains need not be taken to find them any thing more palatable. But what shall we say of the town itself! The lower orders of the people are so brutified and befotted by the lamentable follies of O'Keefe, and Cobbe, and Pillon, and I know not who—Sardi venales, each worse than the other—that they have lost all relish for simplicity and genuine humour: nay, ignorance itself, unless it be gross and glaring, cannot hope for “their most sweet voices.” And the higher ranks are so mawkishly mild, that they take with a placid simper whatever comes before them: or, if they now and then experience a slight fit of disgust, have not resolution enough to express it, but sit yawning and gaping in each others faces for a little encouragement in their pitiful forbearance.

wheels!

(xv)

wheels! There was a time (it was when the Baviad first appeared) that these butterflies were Eagles, and their obscure and desultory flights, the object of universal envy and admiration. They are yet so with too many: and surely no one can wish another to continue under the infatuation from which himself is happily free, for want of a little additional exertion!

1864
The first of the year was a very dry one
and the crops were much injured by the
drought. The wheat was particularly
affected and the yield was very small.
The corn crop was also much injured
by the drought and the yield was very
small. The other crops were also much
injured by the drought and the yield was
very small.

(81)
THE
M Æ V I A D.

NUNC in Ovilia,
Mox in reluctantes dracones.

YES, I DID say that Crusca's* "true sublime"
Lacked taste, and sense, and every thing but rhyme;
That Arno's "easy strains" were coarse and rough,
And Edwin's "matchless numbers" woeful stuff.

IMITATIONS.

HORACE, Sat. 10. Lib. 1.

V. 1. Nempe incompósito dixi pede currere versus
Lucilî. Quis tum Lucilî fautor inepte est,
Ut non hoc fateatur?

NOTES.

* Crusca's "true sublime." The words between inverted commas in this, and the following verses, are Mr. Bell's. They contain, as the reader sees, a short character of the works to which they are respectively affixed. Though I have the misfortune to differ from this gentleman in the present instances, yet I observe such acute-
ness

And who—forgive, O gentle Bell! the word,
 For it must out—who, prithee, so absurd,
 So mulishly absurd, as not to join
 In this with me; save always *THEE*, and *THINE*!
 Yet still, the soul of candour! I allow'd
 Their jingling elegies amused the croud;
 That lords and dukes hung blubbering o'er each line,
 That lady-critics wept, and cried "divine!"
 That love-lorn priests reclined the pensive head,
 And sentimental ensigns, as they read,

5

10

IMITATIONS.

V. 10, &c. ——— At idem quod sale multo
 Urbem defricuit, charta laudatur eadem.
 Nec tamen hoc tribuens dederim quoque cætera: nam sic
 Et Laberî minos, ut pulchra poemata mirer,

NOTES.

ness of perception in his general criticism, that I should have stiled him the "profound" instead of the "gentle" Bell; if I had not previously applied the epithet (see the Baviad) to a still greater man, (absit invidia dicta) to—Mr. T. Vaughan.

I trust this incidental preference will create no jealousy—for though, as Virgil properly remarks, "An oaken staff *EACH* merits;" yet I need not inform a gentleman, who, like Mr. Bell, reads Shakespeare every day after dinner, that "if two men ride upon a horse, one of them must ride behind."

Wiped

Wiped the sad drops of pity from their eye, 15
 And burst between a hiccup and a sigh;
 Yet, not content, like horse-leeches they come,
 And split my head with one eternal hum
 For "more! more! more!" Away! For should I grant
 The full, the unreserved applause, ye want, 20
 St. John* might then my partial voice accuse,
 And claim my suffrage for his tragic muse;
 And Greathead†, rising from his short disgrace,
 Fling the forgotten "Regent" in my face;

IMITATIONS.

V. 17. The horse-leech has two daughters, crying, "Give!
 give!"

PROVERBS.

NOTES.

* St. John, &c. Having already observed in the Introduction that the *Mæviad* was nearly finished two years since, and consequently before the death of this gentleman; I have only to add here, that though I should not have introduced into it any of the heroes of the *Baviad*, quorum *Flaminiâ tegitur cinis*, atque *Latinâ*, yet I scarce think it necessary to make any changes for the sake of omitting such as have passed ad plures, in the interval between writing and publishing.

The reader will find (v. 235) another instance of my small pretensions to prophecy; and probably regret it more than the present.

† Greathead's Regent. Of this tragedy, which was recommended to the world in more than one respectable publication, as "the work of a scholar," I want words to express my opinion. The plot of it was childish, the conduct absurd, the

Bid me my censure, as I may, deplore, 25
And like my brother critics cry "Encore!"

NOTES.

the thoughts false and confused, the metaphors incongruous, the general style groveling and base, the English bad, the grammar worse, and, to sum up all in a word, the whole piece the most execrable abortion of stupidity that ever disgraced the stage.

It is to be wished that Reviewers, sensible of the influence their opinions necessarily have on the public taste, could divest themselves of their partialities, when they sit down to the execution of, what I hope they consider as, their solemn duty. We should not then find them, as in the instance before us, recommending a work to favour, deserving universal reprobation and contempt.

This is perhaps requiring too much; as it supposes them not possessed of the feelings of other mortals. And yet—on considering the importance of the office they have assumed, and the good or evil they have the means of dispensing—I have on more than one occasion lamented that they were "no more, but even men,

—— and commanded

By such poor passions as the maid that milks,

And does the meanest chares."

It is but fair to observe, however, that Mrs. Piozzi has added her venerable suffrage to that of the Reviewers, in favour of Mr. Greathead's abilities.

"O bard! to whom belongs

Each purest fount of poesy!

Who old Hyffus' hallowed dews

In his own Avon dares infuse.

O favoured clime! O happy age!

That boasts to save a sinking stage"

A Greathead! ! !

Gent. Mag.

When

Alas, my learned friends! for learned ye are,
As Bell will say, or, if ye ask it, swear;

IMITATIONS.

V. 27. Ergo non fatis est risu diducere rictu
Auditoris ; & est quædam tamen hîc quoque virtus.

NOTES.

When I read these, and other high sounding praises, scattered over Magazines, Newspapers, and I know not what, without having seen any thing but the Regent ; I was naturally led to suspect that Mr. G. had succeeded better in his smaller pieces, and thus justified in some degree the cry of his " learning, &c." But no. All was a blank!

Here follow a few samples of the " Ilyflean dew infused by Mr. Greathead into his own Avon"—muddled, I suppose, and debased by the home-bred streamlets of one Shakespeare.

" In fuller presence we descry
Mid mountain rocks—a deity
Than eye of man shall e'er behold
In living grace of *sculptur'd* gold."

I would give something to know this " learned Theban's" idea of sculpturing.
In the Regent, he talks of a " Sculptor's kneading docile clay!!!"
More matter for a May morning.

ODE ON APATHY.

" Accurs'd be dull lethargic Apathy,
Whether at eve she listless ride
In sluggish car by tortoise drawn—
With mimic air of senseless pride

D

She

'Tis not enough (though this be somewhat too,
And more perhaps than J - - - can do)

30

NOTES.

She feebly throws on all her withering fight,
While too observant of her sway
Unmark'd her droning subjects lie,
Alike to her who murmur or obey.

I hope the reader understands it.

ODE TO DUEL.

"Never didst thou appear
While Tiber's sons gave law to all the world;
Yet much they loved to desolate and slaughter,
Carthage attest my words
To glut their sanguinary rage,
Not citizens but gladiators fall.
Slavery and vassalage,
And savage broils, twixt nobles are no more.
Vanish thou likewise."——

And these are ODES, good heavens! After the manner of Pindar, I take for granted.

But enough of Mr. G. whom I hesitate not to pronounce, with all his "scholarship," as ignorant a man as any in the three kingdoms. I have only to add, that I am actuated by no personal dislike of Mr. G.; for I can say with the greatest truth (what indeed I can of all the heroes of the Mæviad) that I have not the slightest knowledge of him. But the daws have strutted too long: it is more than time to strip them of their adventitious plumage; and if, in doing it, I shall pluck off any feathers which originally belonged to them, they have only to thank their own vanity, or the forwardness of their injudicious friends.

'Tis

'Tis not enough to dole out Ahs! and Ohs!
Through Kemble's thorax*, or through Bensley's nose;
To fill our stage with scaffolds, or to fright
Our wives with rapes repeated thrice a night.

JUDGES—Not such as self-created, fit 35
On that tremendous bench which skirts the pit,
Ycleped the CRITICS' Row†; where Miles displays
His laurelled front, and gapes around for praise;

NOTES.

* Kemble's thorax * * * hiatus valde defendus * * * But why mention Mr. Bensley? Why not? Is not Mr. Bensley a public man, and his snuffing an object of public concern? But Mr. Bensley is a good man; and perfect in every duty of life. I am glad of it from my soul; and, if I were on the topic of private virtues, would be the first to praise him. But this is from the purpose. While I only follow the fair ground of public criticism, I know of no statute, political or moral, which forbids my saying to Mr. Bensley, or any man whose nose I dislike,

Exi

Jam gravis es nobis, & sæpe emungeris; Exi

Ocyus & propera—

† The Critic's Row. When this was written, (which was while the Opera House was used for Plays) the "learned justicers" here enumerated, together with others *not yet taken*, were accustomed to flock nightly to this seat, from which the unlettered vulgar were always scornfully repelled with an ΟΤΑΕΙΣ. ΑΜΟΤΕΟΙ.

I have not heard whether the New Theatre be possessed of such a "bench:" I think not; for critics are no more gregarious than spiders. Like them, they might do great things in concert, but, like them too, they usually end with devouring one another.

Where idle Thespis nods, while Arno* dreams
 Of Nereids "pudding in ambrosial streams;" 40
 Where Este in rapture cons fantastic airs,
 "Old Pistol new-revived" in Topham stares,
 And Boswell, aping with preposterous pride
 Johnson's worst fraikies, rolls from side to side,
 His heavy head from hour to hour erects, 45
 Affects the fool, and is what he affects——
 JUDGES of truth and sense, yet more demand;
 That art to nature lend a helping hand;
 That fables well devised, be simply told,
 Correct if new, and probable if old. 50
 When Mason leads Elfrida forth to view,
 Adorned with graces which she never knew,
 I feel for every tear; while born along
 By the full tide of unresisted song,

NOTES.

* Arno. The dreams of this gentleman, which continue to make their appearance in the Oracle, under the name of Thespis, are not always of Nereids. He dreamed one night that Mr. Pope played Posthumus with less spirit than usual; and it was Mr. Johnson singing Grammachre! Another night, that the Mourning Bride might have been better cast, and lo! it was the Comedy of Errors that was played!!!

This was rather unfortunate: but the reader must have already observed, from the strange occupations of these "self-created judges" (which I have faithfully described) that, sleeping or waking, they were attentive to every thing but what passed before their eyes.

I stop

I stop not to enquire if all be just,
 But take her goodness, as her grief, on trust ;
 'Till calm reflection checks me, and I see
 The heroine as she was, and ought to be,
 A bold, bad woman, wading to the throne
 Thro' seas of blood, and crimes 'till then unknown : 60
 Then, then I hate the magic that deceived,
 And blush to think how fondly I believed.
 Not so, when Ath'ling*, made in some strange plot
 The hero of the day, that knew him not,
 Struts from the field his enemy had won, 65
 On stately stilts, exulting and undone !
 Here I can only pity, only smile ;
 Where not one grace, one elegance of style,
 Redeems the audacious folly of the rest,
 Truth sacrificed, and history made a jest. 70
 Let this, ye Cruscan†, if your heads be made
 " Of penetrable stuff," let this persuade

NOTES.

* Atheling. See the Battle of Hastings. A tragedy in which Mr. Cumberland has contrived, with matchless dexterity, to introduce every absurdity of every kind.

† Ye Cruscans !

O voi, che della CRUSCA vi chiamate
 Come quei che farina non avendo
 Di QUELLA a tutto pasto vi faziate !—

Your

Your husky tribes their wanderings to restrain,
Nor hope what taste and Mason failed to gain.

Then let your style be brief, your meaning clear, 75
Nor, like Lorenzo*, tire the labouring ear
With a wild waste of words ; sound without sense,
And all the florid glare of impotence.

Still with your characters your language change, 80
From grave to gay, as nature dictates, range ;
Now droop in all the plaintiveness of woe,
Now in glad numbers light and airy flow,
Now shake the stage with guilt's alarming tone, 10112
And make the aching bosom all your own :

IMITATIONS.

V. 75. Est brevitæ opus, ut currat sententia, neu se
Impediat verbis lassas onerantibus aures ;
Et fermone opus est modo tristi sæpe joco.

NOTES.

* Lorenzo. " A lamentable tragedy by Della Crusca, mixed full of pleasant mirth." The house laughed a-good at it ; but Mr. Harris cried sadly. Here is another instance, if it were wanted, of the bad effects of prostitute applause. Could this gentleman, if his mind had not been previously warped by the eternal puffs of Bell and his followers, have supposed, for a moment, that a knack of stringing together " hoar hills" and " rippling rills," and " red skies glare" and " thin, thin air," qualified a man for writing tragedy !

Now

Now——But I sing in vain; from first to last, 85
 Your joy is fustian, and your grief bombast:
 Rhetoric has banished reason; kings and queens
 Vent in hyperboles their royal spleens;
 Guardsmen in metaphors express their hopes,
 And maidens in white linen howl in tropes. 90

Reverent I greet the bards of other days.
 Blest be your names! and lasting be your praise!
 From nature's varied face ye wisely drew,
 And following ages owned the copies true.
 O! had our sots, who rhyme with headlong haste, 95
 And think reflection still a foe to taste,
 But brains your pregnant scenes to understand,
 And give us truth, tho' but at second hand,
 'Twere something yet! But no—they never look:
 Shall souls of fire, they cry, a tutor brook? 100
 Forbid it inspiration! Thus your pain
 Is void, and ye have lived for them in vain;

 IMITATIONS.

V. 91. Illi scripta quibus comœdia prisca viris est
 Hoc stabant, hoc sunt imitandi——

In vain for Crusca, and his skipping school,
 Cobbe, Reynolds, Andrews, and that nobler fool,
 Who nought but Laura's^{*} tinkling trash admire, 105
 And the mad jangle of Matilda's^{*} lyre.

IMITATIONS.

V. 103. — quos neque pulcher
 Hermogenes unquam legit, nec finius iste,
 Nil præter Calvum doctus cantare Catullum.

NOTES.

* Laura's tinkling trash, &c. I had amassed a world of this "tinkling trash" for the behoof of the reader; but having, fortunately for him, mislaid it, and not being disposed to undertake again the drudgery of wading through Mr. Bell's collections, I can only offer him the little that occurs to my memory. Of this little, the merits must be shared among Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Cowley, and Mr. Merry.

Et vos, O Lauri, carpam, & te proxima, Myrte,
 Sic positæ quoniam suaves miscetis odores.

O let me fly

Where greenland darkness drinks the beamy sky!

But oh! beware how thou dost fling

Thy *hot pulse* o'er the quivering string!!!

Pluck from their dark and rocky bed

The yelling demons of the deep,

Who soaring o'er the comet's head,

The bosom of the welkin sweep.

And

But Crusca still has merit, and may claim
No humble station in the ranks of fame;

IMITATIONS.

V. 107. At magnum fecit, quod verbis Græca Latinis
Miscuit.

NOTES.

And when the jolly full moon laughs,
In her clear zenith, to behold
The envious stars withdraw their gleams of gold,
'Tis to thy health she stooping quaffs
The sapphire cup that fairy zephyrs bring!!!

On considering these and the preceding lines, I was tempted to indulge a wish that the blue-stocking club would issue an immediate order to Mr. Bell, to examine the cells of Bedlam. Certainly, if an accurate transcript were made from the "dark-en'd walls" once or twice a quarter, an ALBUM might be presented to the fashionable world, more poetical, and far more rational, than any they have lately honoured with their applause.

Why does thy stream of *sweetest* song
Foam on the mountains murmuring fide,
Or through the vocal covert glide!

I heard a tuneful phantom in the wind,
I saw it watch the rising moon afar
Wet with the weeping of the twilight star.——

The pilgrim who with *tearful* eye shall view
The moon's wan lustre in the midnight dew,
Sooth'd by her light.——

E

This

He taught us first the language to refine,
To croud with beauties every sparkling line; 110

NOTES.

This is an admirable reason for his crying:—but what! Un sot trouve toujours un plus sot qui l'admire. Mr. Bell is in raptures with it, and very properly recommends it to the admiration of Merry, as being the production of “a congenial soul.” There is also another judicious critic, one Dr. Tasker (should it not be Dr. Trusler?) who has given a decided opinion, it seems, in favour of this lady's abilities; which may console her for the sneers of fifty such envious scribblers as the author of the *Baviad*.

And first you shall hear what Mrs. Robinson says of Dr. Tasker.—“The *learned and ingenious* Dr. Tasker, in the third volume of his *elegant and critical* works, has **PRONOUNCED** some of Mrs. Robinson's poems superior to those of Milton on the same subject, particularly her address to the nightingale! The praises of so *competent and disinterested* a judge **STAMPS** celebrity that neither time nor envy can obliterate”!!!

Oracle, Dec. 10.

Next you shall hear what Dr. Tasker says of Mrs. Robinson.

“In antient Greece by two fair forms were seen
Wisdom's stern goddess, and Love's smiling queen,
Pallas presided over arms and arts,
And Venus over gentle virgins' hearts,
But now both powers in one fair form combine,
And in famed Robinson united shine.

This lady, equally celebrated in the polite and literary circles, has honoured Mr.—Lo! the Dr. is dwindled into plain Mr.—has honoured Mr. Tasker's poetical and other productions with high and distinguished marks of her approbation”!

Exeter Paper, Jan. 16.

Why

Old phrases with new meanings to dispense,
Amuse the fancy, and—Confound the sense.

NOTES.

Why this is the very song of Prodicus, *ἡ χεὶρ τῆς χεῖρος κνίζει*—for the rest, I trust my readers will readily subscribe to the praises these most “competent and disinterested judges” have reciprocally lavished on each other.

But allons,

—— my hand at night's fell noon
Plucks from the tresses of the moon
A sparkling crown of silv'ry hue,
Besprent with studs of frozen dew!

On the dizzy height inclined
I listen to the passing wind
That loves my mournful song to seize,
And bears it to the mountain breeze.

Here we find that listening to the wind, and singing to it, are one and the same thing; and that—but I can make nothing of the rest.

When in black obtrusive clouds
The chilly moon her pale cheek shrouds,
I mark the twinkly starring train
Exulting glitter in her wane,
And proudly gleam their borrowed light
To gem the sombre dome of night.

What an admirable observer of nature is this great poetess! The star *twinkling* in a cloudy night, and *gleaming* its BORROWED lustre is superlative. I had almost forgot to observe that these, and the preceding lines, are taken from the Ode to the Night-

O, void of reason! Can you, dare you, praise
 A linsey-woolsey song, framed with such ease,
 Such vacancy of thought, that every line 115
 Might tempt even VAUGHAN to whisper, "THIS is mine!"

IMITATIONS.

V. 113—116. — O feri studiorum! quine putetis
 Difficile et mirum, RHODIO quod PITHOLEONTI
 Contigit.

NOTES.

ingale; so superior, in the reverend judgement of Dr. Tasker, to one of a Mr. John Milton on the same subject.

—— the lightening's rays

Leap through the night's scarce pervious gloom,

Attracted by——[what, for a ducat?]

Attracted by the roses bloom!!!

Let but thy lyre impatient seize

Departing twilight's filmy breeze,

That winds the enchanting chords among

In lingering labyrinths of song.——

See in the clouds its mast the proud bark laves,

Scorning the aid of ocean's humble waves!

From this it appears that Mrs. Cowley fancies proud barks float on their masts. It is proper to mention that the vessel takes such extraordinary state on herself, because she carries Della Crusca!

——from

VAUGHAN! well remembered. He, good man, complains
That I affixed his name to Edwin's* strains:

NOTES.

—— from a young grove's shade

Whose infant boughs but mock th' expecting glade!!!

Sweet sounds stole forth, upborn upon the gale,

Prefs'd thro' the air, and broke upon the vale;

Then silent walked the breezes of the plain,

Or soared aloft, and seiz'd the hovering strain.——

Della Crusca.

The force of folly can no farther go!

* Edwin's strains. If the reader will turn to the conclusion of the Baviad, he will find a delicious *Επιταφιον* on a tame mouse, by this learned gentleman. As it seemed to give universal satisfaction, I embrace with pleasure the opportunity of laying before him another effusion of the same exquisite pen.

It will be found, I flatter myself, not less beautiful than the former, and will serve admirably to prove that the author, though ostensibly devoted to Elegy, can, on a proper occasion, assume an air of gaiety, and be "profound" with ease, and instructive with elegance.

Εδουιν προλογίζει.

"On the circumstance of a Mastiff's running furiously, sad dog! towards two young ladies, and upon coming up to them, becoming instantly gentle good dog! and tractable."

Tantum ad narrandum argumentum est benignitas!

"When Orpheus took his lyre to hell

To fetch his rib away,

On that same thing he pleas'd so well,

That devils learn'd to play.

Besides

'Tis just—for what three kindred souls have done,
 Is most unfairly charged, I ween, on one. 120
 Pardon, my learned friend! With wat'ry eyes
 Thy growing fame to truth I sacrifice;
 To many a sonnet call thy claims in doubt,
 And "at one entrance shut thy glory out."
 Yet MEWL thou still. Shall my lord's dormouse die, 125
 And low in dust without a requiem lie!
 No, MEWL thou still: and while thy — — 's join,
 Their melancholy symphonies to thine,
 My righteous verse shall labour to restore
 The well-earned fame it robbed them of before. 130
 Edwin, whatever elegies of woe
 Drop from the gentle mouths of Vaughan and Co.

NOTES.

Besides in books it may be read,
 That whilst he swept the lute
 Grim Cerb'rus hung his savage head,
 And lay astoundly mute.

But here we can with justice say
 That nature rivals art,
 He sang a mastiff's rage away,
 You look'd one thro' the heart."

Fecit EDWIN.

To

To this, or that, henceforth no more confined,
 Shall, like a surname, take in all the kind.

Right! cry the brethren. When the heaven-born muse 135
 Shames her descent, and for low, earthly views,
 Hums o'er a beetle's bier the doleful stave,
 Or fits chief mourner at a May-bug's grave,
 Satire should scourge her from the vile employ,
 And bring her back to friendship, love, and joy. 140
 But spare Cefario*, Carlost†, Adelaide‡,
 The truest poets! the truest maid!

NOTES.

* Cefario. In the Baviad (p. 42) there are a few stanzas of a most delectable ode to an owl. They were ascribed to Arno: nor was I conscious of any mistake, 'till I received a polite note from that gentleman, assuring me that he was not only not the author of them; but (*horresco referens*) that he thought them "execrable." Mr. Bell, on the other hand, affirms them to be "admirable."

Who shall decide when doctors disagree?

Be this as it may, I am happy to say that I have discovered the true author. They were written by Cefario; and as I rather incline to Mr. Bell, *pace* Arnô dixerim, I shall make no scruple of laying the remainder of this "mellifluous piece" before my reader.

"Slighted love the *soul* subduing,
 Silent sorrow *chills* the heart,
 Treach'rous fancy still pursuing,
 Still repels the *poisoned* dart.

Soothing

NOTES.

*Soothing those fond dreams of pleasure
 Pictur'd in the glowing breast,
 Lavish of her sweetest treasure
 Anxious fear is charm'd to rest.—
 Fearless o'er the whiten'd billows,
 Proudly rise, sweet bird of night,
 Safely through the bending willows,
 Gently wing thy aery flight.*

CESARIO.

Though I flatter myself I have good sense and taste enough to see, and admire the peculiar beauties of this ode, yet a regard for truth obliges me to declare they are not original. They are taken (with improvements, I confess) from a most beautiful “song by a person of quality,” in Pope’s Miscellanies. This, though it detracts a little from Cesario’s inventive powers, still leaves him the praise (no mean one) of having gone beyond that great poet, in what he probably considered as the ne plus ultra of ingenuity.

Venimus ad summum fortunæ! Mr. Greathead equals Shakespeare, Mrs. Robinson surpasses Milton, and Cesario outdoes Pope in that very performance, which he vainly imagined so complete as to take away all desire of imitating, all possibility of excelling it!

“O favoured clime! O happy age!

† Carlos. I have nothing of this gentleman (a most pertinacious scribbler in the Oracle) but the following “sonnet:” luckily, however, it is so ineffably stupid, that it will more than satisfy any reader but Mr. Bell’s.

On

NOTES.

On a Lady's Portrait.

Oft hath the poet hailed the breath of morn,
 That wakens nature with the voice of spring,
 And oft, when purple summer feeds the lawn,
 Hath fancy touched him with her procreant wing,
 Full frequent has he blest'd the golden beam
 Which yellow autumn glowing spreads around,
 And tho' pale winter pres'd a paly gleam,
 Fresh in his breast was young description found——

I can copy no more—Job himself would lose all patience here. Instead, therefore, of the remainder of this incomprehensible trash, I will give the reader a string of judicious observations by Mr. T. Vaughan. “*Bruyere*, (*Oracle*, Jan. 30) says he, will allow that good writers are scarce enough, but adds, and justly, that good critics are equally so: which reminds our correspondent also of what the *Abbe Trublet* writes, speaking of professed critics, where he says, if they were obliged to examine authors impartially—there would be fewer writers in *this way*. Was this to be the liberal practice adopted by our modern critics we should not see a *BAVIAD* (“*Oeno!*” cried Friar John, “who is this *BAVIAD!*”) falling upon men and things, that are much above his capacity, and seemingly for no other reason than because they are so.”

A Daniel come to judgement, yea, a Daniel! This is in truth the reason; and when Mr. Vaughan and his coadjutors will condescend to humble themselves to my understanding, I will endeavour to profit by his eloquent strictures.

‡ *Adelaide*. And who is *Adelaide*? O *seri studiosorum!* “Not to know her argues yourselves unknown.” Hear Mr. Bell, the *Longinus* of Newspaper writers.

Lorenzo^o, Reubent, spare: far be the thought

NOTES.

ADELAIDE.

"HE who is here addressed by the first lyric writer in the kingdom, must himself endeavour to repay a debt so highly honourable, if it can be done by verse! This lady shall have the praise, which ought to be given by THE COUNTRY!!! that of first discovering, and drawing out the *fine powers* of Arno and Della Crusca!"

"O thou whom late I watch'd while o'er thee hung
The orb, whose glories I so oft have sung,
Beheld thee while a *shower of beam*
Made night a lovelier morning seem," &c.

We might here dismiss this "first lyric writer of the age," who, from her flippant nonsense, appears to be Mrs. Piozzi; were it not for the sake of remarking, that whatever be the merit of "drawing out the fine powers of Arno" (which, it seems, this ungrateful country has not yet rewarded with a statue) she must be content to share it with Julia. Hear her Invocation—but first hear Mr. Bell. "A most elegant compliment, which for generous esteem has been seldom equalled, any more than the muse which inspired it."

Julia to Arno.

Arno! where steals thy dulcet lay
Soft as the evening's minstrel note,
Say, does it deck the rising day!!!

Mrs. Robinson (for we may as well drop the name of Julia) has been guilty of a trifling larceny here; having taken from the Baviad (p. 29) without any acknowledgement, a delicious couplet which I flattered myself would never have been seen out of that poem—but so it is, that, like Pope,

— write

Of interest, far from them. Unbribed, unbought,

NOTES.

— write whate'er I will,

Some rising genius SINS up to it still.

This has nettled me a little, and possibly injured the great poetess in my opinion; for I have been robbed so often of late, that I begin to think with the old economist,

Οὐτὸ κοιδῶν ληστὴς ὅς ἐξ ἐμεῦ οἰσεται ὕδεν.

For the rest, this "Invocation" called forth a specimen of Arno's fine powers in the following *dulcet lays*.

Arno to Julia.

Sure some dire star inimical to man

Guides to his heart the desolating fire,

Fills with contention only his brief span,

And rouses him to murderous desire.

There are who sagely scan the tortured world,

And tell us war is but necessity,

That millions, by the great dispenser hurl'd,

Must suffer by this scourge, and cease to be.

Euge Poeta!

* Lorenzo. Καὶ πῶς ἐγὼ Σθενελὺς φαγοιμ' αὖ ρημὰ τι

Εἰς οὗτ' ἐμβαπτομενον, ἢ λευκῆς ἀλας—

Says a hungry wight in an old comedy. But I know of no seasoning, whatever, capable of making the insipid garbage of this modern Sthenelus palatable, even to the voracious appetite of the blue-stocking club: I shall therefore spare myself the disgust of producing it.

† Reuben, whom I take to be Mr. Greathead in disguise, (it being this gentleman's fate, like Hercules of old, to assume the merit of all unappropriated prodigies)

They pour* from their big breasts' prolific zone,

145

NOTES.

Reuben introduced himself to the WORLD by the following "Address to Anna Matilda."

To thee a stranger dares address his theme,
To thee, proud mistress of Apollo's lyre,
One ray emitted from thy golden gleam,
Prompted by love would set the world on fire!
Adorn then love in fancy-tinctured vest,
Camelion like, anon of various hue,
By Penseroso, and Allegro drest,
Such genius claim'd when the Idalia drew.——

Anna Matilda, what could she less! found

—— this resuscitating praise

Breathe life upon her dying lays,

Like "the daisy which spreads her bloom to the moist evening"!!! and accordingly produced a matchless "adornment of love," to the great contentment of the gentle Reuben.

But bard polite, quoth she, how hard the task
Which with *such elegance* you ask!

Who could have thought these lines, the simple tribute of gratitude to genius, would have nearly occasioned "a perdition of souls! Yet so it was. They unfortunately roused the jealousy of Della Crusca "on the sportive banks of the Rhone."
One luckless evening

"When twilight on the western edge
Had twined his hoary hair with fabling sedge,

As

A proud, poetic fervour, only known

NOTES.

As he was "weeping," (for, like Master Stephen, these good creatures think it necessary to be always melancholy) at the tomb of Laura, he started, as well he might, at the accursed name of Reuben.

Hark! quoth he,
 What cruel sounds are these
 Which float upon the languid breeze,
 Which fill my soul with jealous fear!
 Hah! REUBEN is the name I hear.
 For him my *faithless* Anna, &c.

It is with no small regret I add, that the cold-blooded Bell has destroyed this beautiful fancy scene with one stroke of his clownish pen. In a note on the above lines (Album, p. 134) he officiously informs us that Della Crusca knew "nothing of his rival, till he READ" detested word! "his sonnet in the Oracle." * O Bell! Bell! Is it thus thou humblest the strains of the sublime! Surely we may say of thee what was not ill said of one of thy sisters,

Sed tu infulsa male et molesta vives,
 Per quam non licet esse negligentem.

* They pour, &c.

———— I love so well
 Thy soul's deep tone, thy thought's high swell,
 Thy proud poetic fervour known,
 But in thy breast's prolific zone.

Dell. Crus.

To

To souls like theirs'; as Anna's youth inspires,
 As Laura's graces kindle fierce desires,
 As Henriett——For heaven's sake! not so fast.
 I too, my masters, ere my teeth were cast, 150
 Had learned, by rote, to rave of Delia's charms,
 To die of transports found in Chloe's arms,
 Coy Daphne with obstreperous complaints to woo,
 And curse the cruelty of——God knows who,
 When Phœbus, (not the Power that bade thee write, 155
 For he, dear Dapper! was a lying sprite)
 One morn, when dreams are true, approached my side,
 And, frowning on my tuneful lumber, cried,
 Lo! every corner with soft sonnets crammed,
 And high-born odes, "works damned, or to be damned," 160
 And is thy active folly adding more
 To this most worthless, most superfluous store?
 O impotence of toil! thou mightest as well
 Give sense to Este, or modesty to Bell.

 IMITATIONS.

V. 150. Atqui Ego cum græcos facerem, natus mare citra,
 Verficulos, vetuit tali me voce Quirinus
 Post mediam visus noctem, cum somnia vera.

Forbear,

Forbear, forbear: what, tho' thou canst not claim 165
 The sacred honours of a POET's name,
 Due to the few alone, whom I inspire
 With lofty rapture, with etherial fire!
 Yet mayst thou arrogate the humble praise
 Of reason's bard, if, in thy future lays, 170
 Plain sense, and truth, (and surely these are thine)
 Correct thy wanderings, and thy flights confine.
 Here ceased the God, and vanished. Forth I sprang
 While in my ear the voice divine yet rang;
 Seized every rag and scrap, approached the fire, 175
 And saw whole ALBUMS in the blaze expire.

Then shame ensued, and vain regret to have spent
 So many hours (hours which I yet lament,)
 In thriftless industry: and year on year
 Inglorious rolled, while diffidence, and fear, 180
 Represt my voice——unheard, 'till Anna came,
 What! throb'dst thou YET, my bosom, at the name?
 And chased the oppressive doubts that round me clung,
 And fired my breast, and loosened all my tongue.
 Even then (admire, John Bell! my simple ways) 185
 No heaven, and hell, danced madly thro' my lays,
 No oaths, no execrations; all was plain:
 Yet, trust me, while thy "ever jingling train"

Chime

Chime their sonorous woes with frigid art,
 And shock the reason, and revolt the heart; 190
 My hopes, and fears, in nature's language drest,
 Awakened love in many a gentle breast.

How oft, O DART! what time the faithful pair
 Walked forth, the fragrant hour of eve to share,
 On thy romantic banks, have my wild strains, 195
 (Not yet forgot amidst my native plains)
 While THOU hast sweetly gurgled down the vale,
 Filled up the pause of love's delightful tale!
 While, ever as she read, the conscious maid,
 By faltering voice, and downcast looks betray'd, 200
 Would blushing on her lover's neck recline,
 And with her finger—point the tenderest line.

But these are past: and, mark me, Laura! time
 That made what then was venial, now a crime,
 To more befitting cares my thoughts confined, 205
 And drove with youth, its follies from my mind.

IMITATIONS.

V. 195. In sylvam non ligna feras infaniùs, ac si
 Magnus Græcorum malis implere catervas——

Since

Since then, while Merry, and his nurfelings die,
 Thrilled* by the liquid peril of an eye;
 Gasp at a recollection, and drop down
 At the long streamy lightning of a frown;
 I sooth, as humour prompts, my idle vein
 In frolic verse, that cannot hope to gain
 Admission to the Album, nor be seen
 In L——'s Review, or Urban's Magazine.

210

O, for thy spirit, Pope! Yet why? My lays,
 That wake no envy, and invite no praise,
 Half-creeping, and half-flying, yet suffice
 To stagger impudence, and ruffle vice.

215

IMITATIONS.

V. 207. Turgidus Alpinus jugulat dum Memnona, dumque
 Diffingit Rhēni luteum caput, hæc ego ludo,
 Quæ nec in æde sonent certantia iudice Tarpâ.—

NOTES.

* Thrilled, &c.

Bid the streamy lightnings fly,
 In liquid peril from thy eye.

Dell. Cruf.

Ne'er shalt thou know to figh,
 Or on a soft idea die,
 Ne'er on a recollection gasp,
 Thy arms—Ohe! jam satis est.

Anna Mat.

G

An

An hour may come, so I delight to dream,
 When slowly wandering by thy sacred stream, 220
 Majestic Thames! I leave the world behind,
 And give to fancy all th' enraptured mind.
 An hour may come, when I shall strike the lyre
 To nobler themes: then, then, the chords inspire
 With thy own harmony, most sweet, most strong, 225
 And guide my hand thro' all the maze of song!
 Till then, enough for me, in such rude strains
 As mother Wit can give, and those small pains
 A vacant hour allows; to range the town,
 And hunt the clamorous brood of Folly down; 230
 Force every head, in Bell's despite, to wear
 The cap and bells, by nature planted there,
 Muffle the rattle, seize the flavering sholes,
 And drive them, scourged and whimpering, to their holes.
 Burgoyne*, perhaps, unchilled by creeping age, 235
 May yet arise, and vindicate the stage;

 IMITATIONS.

V. 235. Arguta; meretrice potes, Davoque Chremeta
 Eludente senem, comis garrire libellos
 Unus vivorum, Fundani.—

NOTES.

* Burgoyne. See the note on v. 21.

The

The reign of nature and of sense restore,
And be whatever Terence was before.

And you, too, whole Menander! who combine
With his pure language and his flowing line, 240
The SOUL of Comedy; may steal an hour
From the fond chace of still-escaping power,
The poet and the sage again unite,
And sweetly blend instruction with delight.

And yet Elfrida's bard, tho' time has shed 245
The snow of age too deep around his head;
Feels the kind warmth, the fervor, that inspired
His youthful breast, still glow unchecked, untired:
And yet, tho' like the bird of eve, his song
"Fit audience finds" not in the giddy throng; 250
The notes, tho' artful wild, tho' numerous chaste,
Fill with delight the sober ear of taste.

But these, and more I could with honour name,
Too proud to stoop, like me, to vulgar game,
Subjects more worthy of their daring chuse, 255
And leave at large the abortions of the muse.

IMITATIONS.

V. 245. — ductu molle atque facetum
Virgilio annuerunt gaudentes rure Camenæ.

Proud of their privilege, th' innumerable spawn,
 From bogs and fens, the mire of Pindus, drawn,
 New vigour feel, new confidence assume,
 And swarm like Pharaoh's frogs in every room. 260
 Sick of th' eternal croak which, ever near,
 Beat like the death-watch on my tortured ear;
 And sure, too sure, that many a genuine child
 Of truth and nature, checked his wood-notes wild*,
 Dear to the feeling heart—in doubt to win 265
 The vacant wanderer, midst th' unceasing din
 Of this hoarse rout; I seized at length the wand;
 Resolved, tho' small my skill, tho' weak my hand,
 The mischief in its progress to arrest,
 And exorcise the soil of such a pest. 270

NOTES.

* Checked his wood-notes wild. Σιωπησαντων κολοιων ατον ται κυκνοι. But this is better illustrated in a most elegant fable of Lessing's, to which I despair of doing justice in a translation.

Du zürnest, Liebling der Mufen, &c. &c.

Thou art troubled, darling of the Muses, thou art troubled at the clamorous swarms of insects which infest Parnassus. O hear from me what once the nightingale heard from the shepherd.

Sing then, said he to the silent songstress, one lovely evening in the spring, sing then, sweet nightingale! Alas! said the nightingale, the frogs croak so loud, that I have lost all desire to sing: dost thou not hear them? I do, indeed, replied the shepherd—but thy silence alone is the cause of it.

“ There's comfort yet!”

Hence!

Hence! in the name—I scarce had spoke, when lo!
Reams of outrageous sonnets*, thick as snow,
Flew round my head; yet, in my cause secure,
“ Pour on,” I cried, “ pour on, I will endure;

NOTES.

* Reams of outrageous sonnets. Of these I have collected a very reasonable quantity, which I purpose to prefix to some future edition of the *Mæviad*, (for I do not intend this to be the only one) under the true classic head of

INSIGNIUM VIRORUM
ALIQVOT TESTIMONIA
QUI

BAV. ET MÆV. INCLYTISS. AUCTORIS
MEMINERUNT.

Meanwhile I shall present the reader with the two first that occur, as a specimen of the collection.

SONNET I.

“ To the anonymous author of the *Baviad*, occasioned by his scurrilous, and most unmerited attack on Mr. Weston.

DEMON OF DARKNESS! whosoe'er thou art,
That dar'st assume the brighter angel's form,
And o'er the peaceful vale impel the storm,
With many a sigh to rend the *honest* heart,
Force from th' *unconscious* eye the tear to start,
And with just *pride* th' indignant bosom warm;
Avaunt! to where unnumber'd spirits swarm,
Foul and malignant as thyself, depart.
Genius of Pope descend, ye servile crew
Of imitators vile, intrude not!!! I appeal

To.

Yea, stand your brave;" tho' Laura, versed in wiles, 275
 Purchase whole SATIRES on me with her smiles;

NOTES.

To thee, and thee alone from outrage base,
 Tell me tho' fair the forms his fancy drew,
 Should'st thou the secrets of his heart reveal,
 Would fame his memory crown, or cover with disgrace."

J. M.

Gent. Mag. Aug. 1792.

This poor driveller, who is stupid enough to be Weston's admirer, and malignant enough to be his friend, I take to be one Morley; whom I now and then observe in the Gent. Mag. ushering his great prototype's doggel into notice, with an importance truly worthy of it.

SONNET II.

To the execrable Baviad.

MONSTER OF TURPITUDE! who seem'st inclined
 Through me to pierce with thy *impregnate* dart,
 The *fine-spun* NERVE of each *full-bosom'd** mind,
 And rock in *apathy*—the SENSIVE heart,
 TREMBLE! for lo! MY ORACLE—*so famed*
 Shall RING each morn in thy ACCURSED ear
 A *griding* pang! so—when the GRECIAN MARE†
 Enter'd the town, old Pyramus exclaim'd

* Quere full-bottom'd?

Printer's Devil.

† Grecian MARE. This has been *hitherto*, inaccurately enough, named the Trojan HORSE; and, indeed, I myself had nearly fallen into the unscholarlike error, when my learned friend Greathead convinced me (from Pope's emendations of Virgil, under the fantastic name of Scriblerus) that the animal in question was a MARE—She being *there* said
 to

Tho' Anna, old and poor, extend her brief,
 And "for the Lord's sake" earn a small relief,
 An EPIGRAM or twain; tho' Mira rouze
 Th' Arcadian droves that on her bounty brouze, 280
 And while they bray applause, with furious zeal,
 TO ARMS! TO ARMS! in childish treble squeal.

NOTES.

I fee! I fee!—and *hurl'd* his LIGHTNING spear,
 While Capaneus drew back HIS head—for fear,
 And *godlike** Alexander——gazing round,
 Unconscious of his victories—TO COME,
 Approach'd the monarch, and with *sobs* profound
 Explain'd th' *impending* wrath o'er Ilium's royal dome.

J. Bell.

to be *foeta armis*, armed with a *foetus*. Let us hear no more, therefore, of the Trojan HORSE.

The patronymick TROJAN is still more absurd. Homer expressly declares the Mare to have been produced by Pallas—*Palladis arte*: now Pallas was a GRECIAN Goddess, as is sufficiently manifest from her name, which is derived from Πάλλα, vibro.

J. Bell.

* Godlike; that is, *θεοειδης*, from *θεο*, God, and *ειδης*, like. (Vide Hom.) Translators in general (I except a late one) are too inattentive to the compound epithets of this great poet. By why does Homer call Alexander Godlike, when he appears from Curtius Quintus tedious gazette, in verse, to have had one shoulder higher than the other? My friend V—— thinks it was purely to pay his court to him, in hopes of getting into his Will, or rather *into his* MISTRESSES. It may be so; but 'tis strange the absurdity was never noticed before.

J. Bell.

What!

What! shall I shrink, because the noble train
 Whose judgement I impugn, whose taste arraign,
 Alive, and trembling for their favourites' fate, 285
 Pursue my verse with unrelenting hate!

No:—save me from their PRAISE, and I can fit
 Calm, unconcerned, the butt of Andrew's wit,
 And Topham's sense; perversely gay, can smile
 While Este, the zany, in his motley style, 290
 Calls barbarous names; while Bell and Boaden rave,
 And Vaughan, a brother blockhead's verse to save,
 Toils day by day my character to draw,
 And heaps upon me every thing—but law.

But do I then, (abjuring every aim) 295
 All censure flight, and all applause disclaim?
 Not so: where Judgement holds the rod, I bow
 My humbled neck, awed by her angry brow;
 Where taste and sense approve, I feel a joy
 Dear to my heart, and mixed with no alloy. 300

 IMITATIONS.

V. 283—288. Men' moveat cimex Pantilius? aut cruciet, quòd
 Vellicet absentem Demetrius? aut quod ineptus
 Fannius Hermoginis lædat conviva Tigelli?

I write

I write not to the modish herd: my days,
 Spent in the tranquil shades of lettered ease,
 Ask no admiring stare from those I meet,
 No loud "that's HE!" to make their passage sweet.
 Pleased to steal softly by, unmarked, unknown, 305
 I leave the world to Holcroft, Pratt*, and Vaughan.

NOTES.

* Pratt. This gentleman lately put in practice a very notable scheme. Having scribbled himself fairly out of notice, he found it expedient to retire to the continent for a few months—to provoke the enquiries of Mr. Lane's indefatigable readers.

Mark the ingratitude of the creatures! No enquiries were made, and Mr. Pratt was forgotten before he had crossed the channel. *Ibi omnis effusus labor.*—But what!

The mouse that is content with one poor hole,
 Can never be a mouse of any soul.

Baffled in this expedient, he had recourse to another, and, while we were dreaming of nothing less, came before us in the following paragraph.

"A few days since died, at Basle in Swisserland, the ingenious Mr. Pratt. His loss will be severely felt by the literary world; as he joined to the accomplishments of the gentleman, the erudition of the scholar."

This was inserted in the London papers for several days successively. The country papers too, "yelled out like syllables of dolour." At length, while our eyes were yet wet for the irreparable loss we had sustained, came a second paragraph, as follows.

"As no event of late has caused a more general sorrow than the supposed death of the ingenious Mr. Pratt; we are happy to have it in our power to assure his numerous admirers, that he is as well as they can wish, and (what they will be delighted to hear) busied in preparing his TRAVELS for the press."

H

"Laud

Of these enough. Yet may the few I love,
 For who would sing in vain! my verse approve;
 Chief thou, my friend! who, from my earliest years,
 Hast shared my joys, and more than shared my cares. 310

Sure, if our fates hang on some hidden Power,
 And take their colour from the natal hour,
 Then, IRELAND*! the same planet on us rose,
 Such the strong sympathies our lives disclose!
 Thou knowest how soon we felt this influence bland, 315
 And sought the brook and coppice hand in hand,

 IMITATIONS.

V. 307. — probet hæc Octavius, optimus atque
 Fuscus: & hæc utinam Viscorum laudet uterque!

NOTES.

“Laud we the Gods!” I hope Mr. Debrett has *already* bought them; and that they will prove as intelligible to the world, and as profitable to himself, as those of the morosoph Este.

* Here, on account of its connection with the person mentioned in the text, I shall take the liberty—*extremum hunc mihi concede*—of inserting the following “Imitation,” addressed to him several years since. It was never printed; nor, as far as I know, seen by any but himself: and I transcribe it for the press, with mingled sensations of gratitude and delight, at the favourable change of circumstances we have BOTH experienced since it was written.

And shaped rude bows, and uncouth whistles blew,
And paper kites (a last, great effort,) flew;

NOTES.

TO THE

REV. MR. IRELAND.

IMITATION OF HORACE.

LIB. II. ODE 16.

Otium Divos rogat, &c.

WHEN howling winds, and lowering skies,
The light, untimbered bark surprize
Near Orkney's boisterous seas;
The trembling crew forget to swear,
And bend the knees, unused to prayer,
To ask a little ease.

For ease the Turk, ferocious, prays,
For ease the barbarous Ruffe—— for ease,
Which P—— could ne'er obtain;
Which Bedford lacked amidst his store,
And liberal Clive, with mines of ore,
Oft bade for—but in vain.

For not the liveried troop that wait
Around the mansions of the great,
Can keep, my friend, aloof;
Fear, that attacks the mind by fits,
And Care, that like a raven, flits
Around the lordly roof.

And when the day was done, retired to rest,
Sleep on our eyes, and sunshine in our breast.

320

NOTES.

"O, well is he," to whom kind heaven
A decent competence has given!
Rich in the blessing sent;
He grasps not anxiously at more,
Dreads not to use his little store,
And fattens on content.

"O, well is he!" for life is lost,
Amidst a whirl of passions tost:
Then why, dear Jack, should man,
Magnanimous Ephemera! stretch
His views beyond the narrow reach
Of his contracted span!

Why should he from his country run,
In hopes, beneath a foreign sun,
Serenest hours to find?
Was never man in this wild chace,
Who changed his nature with his place,
And left himself behind.

For, winged with all the lightning's speed,
Care climbs the bark, Care mounts the steed,
An inmate of the breast:
Nor Barca's heat, nor Zembla's cold,
Can drive from that pernicious hold,
The too-tenacious guest.

They

In riper years, again together thrown,
Our studies, as our sports before, were one.

NOTES.

They, whom no anxious thoughts annoy,
Grateful, the *present* hour enjoy,
Nor seek the *next* to know;
To lighten every ill they strive,
Nor, ere Misfortune's hand arrive,
Anticipate the blow.

Something must ever be amiss——
Man has HIS JOYS; but perfect bliss
Lives only in the brain:
We cannot all have all we want;
And Chance, unasked, to THIS may grant
What THAT has begged in vain.

WOLF rushed on death in manhood's bloom,
PAULET crept slowly to the tomb;
Here breath, *there* fame was given:
And that wise Power who weighs our lives,
By *contras*, and by *pers*, contrives
To keep the balance even.

To THEE she gave two piercing eyes,
A body——just of Tydeus' size,
A judgement sound, and clear;
A mind with various science fraught,
A liberal soul, a thread-bare coat,
And forty pounds a year.

To

Together we explored the stoic page
 Of the Ligurian, stern tho' beardless sage!
 Or traced the Aquinian thro' the Latine road, 325
 And trembled at the lashes he bestowed.
 Together too, when Greece unlocked her stores,
 We roved in thought o'er Troy's devoted shores;
 Or followed, while he fought his native soil,
 That old man eloquent from toil to toil; 330
 Lingered with good Alcinoüs o'er the tale,
 'Till the east reddened, and the stars grew pale.
 So past our life; till fate, severely kind,
 Tore us apart, and land and sea disjoined,

NOTES.

To ME, one eye not over good,
 Two sides, that, to their cost, have stood
 A ten years hectic cough;
 Aches, stitches, all the numerous ills
 That swell the devilish doctor's bills,
 And sweep poor mortals off.

A coat more bare than thine, a soul
 That spurns the croud's malign controul;
 A fixed contempt of wrong;
 Spirits above affliction's power,
 And skill to charm the lonely hour
 With no inglorious song.

For

For many a year: now met, to part no more, 333
 The ascendant Power, confessed so strong of yore,
 Stronger by absence, every thought controuls,
 And knits in perfect unity our souls.

O Ireland! if the verse that thus essays
 To trace our lives "even from our boyish days," 340
 Meet thy applause; the world beside may rail——
 I care not——at the uninteresting tale:
 I only seek, in language void of art,
 To ope my breast, and pour out all my heart;
 And, boastful of thy various worth, to tell, 345
 How long we loved, and thou canst add, HOW WELL!

Thou too, MY HOPPNER! if my wish availed,
 Shouldst praise the strain that but for thee had failed:
 Thou knowest, when Indolence possessed me all,
 How oft I roused at thy inspiring call; 350
 Burst from the Syren's fascinating power,
 And gave the Muse thou lovest one studious hour.

Proud of thy friendship, while the voice of fame
 Pursues thy merits with a loud acclaim,
 I share the triumph—not unpleased to see 355
 Our kindred destinies; for thou, like me,
 Wast thrown too soon on the world's dangerous tide,
 To sink or swim, as chance might best decide.

ME,

Me, all too weak to gain the distant land,
 The waves had whelmed, but that an outstretched hand . 360
 Kindly upheld, when now with fear unnerved,—
 And still protects the life it then preserved.

THEE, powers untried, perhaps unfelt before,
 Enabled, tho' with pain, to reach the shore,
 While * * * stood by, the doubtful strife to view, 365
 Nor lent a friendly arm to help thee through.

Nor ceased the labour there: Hate, ill-supprest,
 Advantage took of thy ingenuous breast,
 Where saving wisdom yet had placed no screen,
 But every word, and every thought was seen, 370
 To darken all thy life:—'tis past; more bright
 Thro' the departing gloom thou strikest the light;
 While baffled malice hastes thy powers to down,
 And wonders at the worth so long unknown.

I too, whose voice no claims but truth's e'er moved, 375
 Who long have seen thy merits, long have loved,
 Yet loved in silence, lest the rout should say
 Too partial friendship tuned th' applausive lay;
 Now, now that all conspire thy name to raise,
 May join the shout of unsuspected praise. 380

Go then, since the long struggle now is o'er,
 And envy can obstruct thy fame no more

With

With ardent hand thy magic toil pursue,
 And pour fresh wonders on our raptur'd view.
 One sun is set, one glorious sun; whose rays
 Long gladdened Britain with no common blaze:
 O, may'st thou soon (for clouds begin to rise)
 Assert his station in the eastern skies,
 Glow with his fires, and give the world to see
 Another REYNOLDS risen, my friend, in **THEE.**

But whither roves the Muse? I but designed
 To note the few whose praise delights my mind;
 But friendship's power has drawn the verse astray,
 Wide from its aim, a long, but flowery way.
 Yet one remains, ONE NAME for ever dear,
 With whom, conversing many a happy year,
 I marked with secret joy the opening bloom
 Of Virtue, prescient of the fruits to come,
 Truth, honour, rectitude——O while thy breast,
 My BELGRAVE! of its every wish possessest,
 Swells with its recent transports, recent fears,
 And tenderest titles strike, yet charm thy ears,
 Say, wilt thou from thy feelings pause awhile,
 To view my humble labours with a smile?
 Thou wilt: for still 'tis thy delight to praise,
 And still thy fond applause has crowned my lays.

Here then I rest, soothed with the hope to prove
 The approbation of "the few I love,"
 Joined (for ambitious thoughts will sometimes rise)
 Joined to the endurance of the good and wise. 410
 Thus happy,—I can leave with tranquil breast
 Fashion's loud praise to Laura, and the rest,
 Who rhyme and rattle, innocent of thought,
 Nor know that nothing can proceed from nought.
 Thus happy,—I can view, unruffled, Miles 415
 Twist into splay-foot doggrel all St. Giles,
 Edwin spin paragraphs with Vaughan's whole skill,
 Esle, rapt in nonsense, gnaw his grey-goose quill,
 Merry in dithyrambies wail his wrongs,
 And Weston, foaming from Pope's odious songs, 420
 "Much-injured Weston," vent in odes his grief,
 And fly to Urban for a short relief.

IMITATIONS.

V. 410. Complures alios, doctos ego quos—

Prudens prætereo; quibus hæc sunt qualiacunque

Arridere velim; doliturus, si placeant spe

Deterius nostra. Demetri teque Tigelli,

Discipularum inter jubeo plorare cathedras.

FINIS

